

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1)(original) A flexible and scalable method for handling telecommunication equipment through the control of ATM access networks, ~~characterized in that the~~ wherein a Board Relay (BR) functionality is attributed to any Device Processor (DP) ~~and in that~~ ~~the~~ wherein a Central Processor (CP) is connected to all the other Device Processors (DP) by simply addressing the messages to the Board Relay (BR) and relaying them through it.

2)(original) Method according to claim 1), wherein the Board Relay (BR) functionality supervises all the other Device Processors (DP) on behalf of the Central Processor.

3)(currently amended) Method according to claim 1) ~~and 2)~~, wherein the Board Relay (BR) functionality is given by the Central Processor (CP) to the Device Processors (DP) chosen according to the network configuration, through configuration messages.

4)(currently amended) Method as in ~~claims 1) to 3)~~ claim 1 wherein the bandwidth allocated through an ATM backbone for a single management connection (PVC) is shared between the device processors (DP) supervised by the board relay (BR).

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5)(currently amended) Method according to ~~claims 1) to 4)~~claim 1, wherein the connections between Central Processor (CP) and Device Processors (DP) take place using Ethernet and ATM network/switch.

6)(currently amended) Method according to ~~claims 1) to 5)~~claim 1, implementable both on newly designed and existing networks.